



A Brief and Necessary

DISCOVERY

Of some of the

BENEFITS

OF

Free Ports;

SHEWING

That Two or Three *Free-ports* in each Kingdom will much improve our Maritime Commerce; and that the Riches, strength, and safety of the King and his Subjects, will be exceedingly increased thereby.



Amongst the many prudent Laws which the policy of our Ancestors have, (after many deliberate consultations) contrived for procuring the flourishing Estate of our King, and his Kingdoms, no Temporal Laws are or can be of greater concernment, than those that contain solid directions, whereby the *Naval Commerce*, and consequently the Riches, strength, and safety of these Kingdoms may be best increased, and improved,

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For

For these *Islands* by increasing their *Ships and Seamen*, and by improving their *Maritime Commerce*, may be best enriched and secured, and best continue their antient *naval Dominion* over the *Seas*, (whereof the *Honour of the Flag* is but the *Shadow*) and therefore herein, their *well being* and *safety* doth consist.

And the advantages these *Kingdoms* have over the rest of *Europe*, in *Scituations*, *Harbours*, *Fishings*, *Provisions*, *Manufactures*, and in the *rich materials* to make them with, and in *Plantations*, are so very great, and the *Inhabitants* are so inclinable to *Sea Affairs*, that these *Kingdoms* cannot but (in a short time) exceed all others in *Riches*, *Shipping*, and *Seamen*, if we be not extremely wanting to our selves, and to our *Posterity*, and suffer our selves, and our *Posterity* to be deprived of such unspeakable Benefits, by neglecting our greatest advantages.

These great advantages may infallibly be secured to us by appointing seasonably Two or Three Free Ports in each *Kingdom*, chiefly for the collecting & carriage of *Fish*, & *forreign Goods*, which few will bring into dear Ports;

And for which, not onely the scituations of these *Kingdoms* render them sufficiently convenient, but our largest, most capacious, and most excellent *Harbours*, are by the *Divine Providence* (which hath done nothing in vain) so fitly scituated, as if intended for these uses.

And these are not like many *Forreign Ports*, barred, and sometimes frozen, but are alwayes open, and by their safe and deep *Channels*, may seem to invite *Foreigners* distressed by storms, cross winds, want of *Provisions*, or of other necessities, or by any other accidents, to put into them, there to refresh, and furnish themselves with whatsoever might be fit to supply their occasions.

But the great and wonderful Benefits that may be gained to us by these Free Ports, may sufficiently appear by this, that all our *Maritime commerce* must necessarily proceed from our own *Product* and *Manufactures*, or from *Fish* and *forreign Goods*.

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And these may be distinguished into these Four Branches,

Portations, Exportations, Fishings & Transportations.

And the Returns of the Three last called *Importations*.

Portations are the carriage of our Product and Manufactures by water within his Majesties Dominions, and these are

Near Portations on the Rivers, or within, or between these Kingdoms.

or *Remote Portations*, between, these Kingdoms and their Plantations, or between our Plantations;

Exportations are the carriage of our own Product, and Manufactures into foreign Parts, in our own, or foreign Ships.

Fishings, procure us the Product of the Seas, and are either

Our Near Fishings, near the coasts of these Kingdoms for Herrings, Cod, Ling, Pilcherds, and other Fish. or

Our Remote Fishings at Island, Greenland, Newfoundland, or at our other Plantations;

Transportations are the (Transient-portations or) carrying out again by Sea, of Fish, or foreign Goods, in our own, or any foreign Ships, for our selves, or Forreigners.

And these Four (from whence may naturally flow so great and continued an increase of Riches, and Naval strength) are the natural Dowry of these Kingdoms, and cannot possibly be alienated from them, but by their extream neglect, and yet we (not duly valuing these our great concerns) suffer Strangers daily to deprive us of the best of them, in so great a measure, that foreign

shipping and Seamen are more increased thereby than ours.

The bringing these Four into their natural Channel, and increasing and improving them to our best advantages, will so vastly increase and improve our shipping and Seamen, and will add so much riches and strength to the King, and these Kingdoms, and to Posterity, as will much increase their glory and greatness;

The two first, our *Portations*, and *Exportations*, proceeding onely from, the Products and Manufactures of his Majesties Dominions, and the Returns of them, may be much improved by the prudent laying on of customs in the fittest Ports and Seasons, whereby the importing forreign superfluous Trifles, that serve but to corrupt the Natives, and coming from our nearest Neighbours, (and employing fewest ships and Seamen) lessen our Navigation, may be prevented; and thereby the Vent of our own Product and Manufactures, (especially within our selves) may be more encouraged, than of forreign, and these Customs are chiefly borne by the Inhabitants, and yet may profit them, by regulating their consumptions.

And though in these our *Portations* and *Exportations*, forreign shipping are employed as well as our own, yet near Eight thousand Sail of our own ships are employed therein, whereof near six thousand are employed in *porting* our own Products and Manufactures between our selves, and about Two thousand of our ships are employed in *exporting* them to Foreigners; and the Subjects of no other Kingdom or Countrey in Europe, doth employ the tenth part of that number of ships in *porting* & *exporting* their own Product and Manufactures.

The great advantages these Kingdoms have over all the forreign Parts of Europe, of employing many ships, and Seamen, in their own *Portations*, are by reason of their many distant Ports, which (being Islands, and having many

many good Plantations) they are furnished with ; and these *Portations* may be much increased and improved by increasing and improving our most *profitable Plantations*, by free Ports, and Small Duties on their Export.

But as our *Portations* may be much increased by the assuming them to our selves, and employing onely His Majesties Subjects, and their shipping therein ; so may they be much increased and improved by appointing (in the most convenient places) Two or Three *Free ports* in each Kingdom, that is, *Ports* where little or no Customs; or Duties should be paid, for any Goods or Merchandise, brought thereinto by Sea, and after shipt out again.

Thus about a Twelfth part of the present Customes being onely taken upon those Goods that are brought into any of these *Free ports* from any other Kingdome or Countrey, than that to which the said *Free ports* shall respectively belong, shall incourage Merchants to fill these *Ports* with ships and Seamen, and with such great *Magazines* and *Stores* of our own and foreign Goods, that it will thereby afford them most advantageous opportunities of collecting our product and Manufactures in convenient proportions, at the fittest times, and from the cheapest places, and of disposing of them to such *Ports*, as shall most want them, and at such seasons when they shall give most for them, and will procure to the Inhabitants in exchange thereof, such suitable Returns, at the most seasonable times, and at the cheapest rates, that thereby our *Portations* and *Exportations* will be much increased, and our *product* and *Manufactures*, and the great profit gained by them, will in few years be more than doubled.

We may with the more confidence assure our selves, that these *Free ports* will increase our *Exportations* in our own ships, because we shall be thereby inabled to collect and distribute such of our product and Manufactures, by
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means of our *Free ports* with forreign Goods, as Forreign-
ners have been inabled (by reason of low Customs) to
collect, and distribute, formerly with their own Goods :

For our Customs and Duties being in our *Free ports*,
as low or lower than in forreign parts, we may reasona-
bly expect, that our Goods, that are most necessary,
most lasting, and vendible in the farthest Markets, should
rather (with their less necessary and perishing Goods)
be collected, in, and distributed from, our *Free ports*, than
from their *Ports*; the goodness of our *Harbours*, and the
plenty of our most *excellent provisions for victualling ships*,
being also great encouragements thereunto.

But when we shall rightly consider, that though the
greatest Fishings in the world belong to these Kingdoms;
and though some of our Ports are the best, and the best
situated in *Europe* for the disposing of our Fishings, and
for the great Trade of Transportations between the North
and South parts of *Europe*.

Yet Foreigners imploy at least sixteen or twenty thou-
sand sail of ships therein, whilst we (with all our ad-
vantages) imploy not a Twentieth part of that
number, in these *Fishings*, and *Transportations*, nor ever
shall without Two or Three convenient *Free ports* in
each Kingdom;

If then we likewise consider, that by appointing
onely Two or Three *Free ports* in each Kingdom in the
most convenient places for the *Fishing Trade*, and the
Trade of *Transportations*, we shall undoubtedly draw
the greatest part of these Trades to our selves, and shall
imploy most shipping and Seamen therein, these conside-
rations cannot but make the setting up of these *Free ports*
extremely desirable to us, and these would be certainly
the effects of *Free ports*.

For they would infallibly procure to these Kingdomes
the greatest Fishing Trade, (for the most convenient Har-
bours

hours between the North and South parts of Europe that are near our greatest Fishings, being appointed for Free ports) all necessaries for our Fishings, would be plentifully provided there, by Merchant-Staplers, and others, and vended there at the cheapest Rates, and Fishers may there furnish themselves with them in Barter for other Goods; and would there find a ready good vent for their Fish, and good Returns for their own Ports, and the Fish with our own and forreign Goods, might be sent out again in such quantities, and to such places as may best vend, or Barter them, whereby our Fishings without any charge or hazard to the publick, will be exceedingly increased, and it is impossible to increase much our Fishings without Free ports.

These Kingdoms may likewise by Free ports be made the greatest Staple or Storehouse, for treasuring up the product and Manufactures of the World, and hereby Merchants, and their Children after them, may be enabled succesfully to continue out their Estates in Trading-stocks, which doubled every Two or Three years, would for every pound imployed therein, produce in Twenty or Thirty years above a Thousand pounds, whereby these would not onely be much enriched, but the Riches and strength of these Kingdoms would thereby be most increased, and industry and frugality, which are the pillars that (supported by rewards and punishments) uphold all civil Governments, will thereby be most improved and encouraged.

And thus by our well-sorted Cargoes fitted for most ports, we may imploy *bigger and more serviceable ships*, at *less charges*, and to *more profit*, than formerly;

And shall not onely fully and profitably imploy the present Inhabitants, but many Thousands of forreign Artists, and others, that by these great advantages of Free ports, shall be encouraged to come and inhabit in these Kingdoms.

These

And in Free ports the King and his Subjects may build victual and repair ships cheapest, and may soonest and best furnish them for all occasions;

And these Ports will best increase and improve the Kings Customs, and yet not take them from the Merchants out of the Trading stock, but from the Inhabitants, when the Goods or Merchandise are carried out, or are brought in, to be consumed.

And thus these Free ports, by restoring the ancient way of Commerce by *Barter* will supply the present want of Moneys, and by increasing all parts of Commerce, and more especially the improving profits that may be gained by *Plantations, Fishings, and Transportations*, will much enrich *His Majesty and His Kingdoms*, and enlarge *His Dominions*, and secure unto him the *Sovereignty of the Sea*.

These great advantages are certain, and easily obtained, and may be some of the many reasons that obliged the late Parliament of *Ireland* in their Act for Customs, to affirm that much benefit and advantage might arise to the King and the Kingdom of *Ireland* by appointing Three or Four Free ports.

And though these before mentioned are the least in Number, of those many great advantages that may be gained to these Kingdoms, and to the world, by appointing Two or Three convenient Free ports in each Kingdom, yet they are (I believe) incomparably the greatest that have ever yet been proposed to these Kingdoms; and for the procuring these advantages, some few Free ports are so absolutely necessary, that (if denied) I doubt not to prove, that all other proposals for increasing our *Maritime Commerce without Free ports*, will prove either *trivial or dangerous*.

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